

# Tidy Towns Competition 2018

## Adjudication Report

Centre: **Errill** Ref: **414**  
County: **Laois** Mark: **291**  
Category: **B** Date(s): **21/06/2018**

	<b>Maximum Mark</b>	<b>Mark Awarded 2018</b>
Community – Your Planning and Involvement	60	47
Streetscape & Public Places	50	39
Green Spaces and Landscaping	50	45
Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality	50	20
Sustainability – Doing more with less	50	13
Tidiness and Litter Control	90	61
Residential Streets & Housing Areas	50	32
Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes	50	34
<b>TOTAL MARK</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>291</b>

### **Community – Your Planning and Involvement / An Pobal - Pleanáil agus Rannpháirtíocht:**

Cuireann an moltóir seo fáilte roimh Errill (Eiréil) chuig Comórtas na mBailte Slachtmhara SuperValu 2018 agus chuig Ceiliúradh 60 Bliain an Chomórtais.

You are very welcome back to the Tidy Towns competition after an absence of 6 years. You are making very positive strides. Many other groups of your size envy a committee of 12. Your list of groups that support your activities is also extensive. More information on how they assist you would be welcome. Sometimes groups will take on a particular project that supports one of the categories adjudicated under Tidy Towns and these should be included on their behalf.

We encourage all groups to submit a 3 year plan. It does not have to be professionally done up. Just a page with the three years 2019, 2020, 2021 and a few bullet point under each. Alternatively have a table showing if the project is new, ongoing or a future project. It is usually satisfying for Tidy Towns groups to see at a glance all of the work that has been carried out in one year.

We would encourage you to get in contact with other Tidy Towns groups to learn from each other.

### **Streetscape & Public Places / Sráid-Dreach & Áiteanna Poiblí:**

The re-furbishment of your village square delivers a very good impression. The mature trees are complemented by the planting. You mentioned that these trees were pruned professionally last year. With the increasing number of storms we are experiencing this a great investment to ensure their survival.

The building surrounding the square have for the most part remained true to their original features. We are glad to note that you are working with the HSE to clean up around their now disused Health Centre.

You mention in your report that the Yellow house was painted by volunteers. This is certainly a big project for volunteers. Providing a “before” and “after” pictures would help to highlight the work achieved.

Downings public house on the corner looked bright and colourful. The planters on Allen’s pub helped to brighten this building.

The school has a fine playing pitch which was being utilised on day of adjudication.

St. Kieran’s Graveyard with the old ruin on the church provides a wonderful view from the community centre surrounded by the pasture landscape. The headstones including the Celtic crosses are a wonderful built heritage inheritance. Are you children from the nearby school taught the history of here? It is one way of creating an awareness of their built heritage.

The promotion and use of the Irish language gets extra marks in this category. Your three housing estates all have their names presented bi-lingual.

### **Green Spaces and Landscaping / Spásanna Glasa agus Tírdhreachú:**

The seating area at the old pump offers the chance for villagers to do what has been done for generations; people can meet up and catch up. It helps provide a great focal community gathering point. The community garden looked like it was ready for some extra work. Bags of multi-purpose compost were seen near the poly tunnel and lots of empty seedling pots and trays at different stages. We look forward to reading more about this at your next submission. Social ties are important to the wellbeing of people in a community since they can bring positive health effects and community involvement. Community gardens allow for the creation of social ties and build a greater feeling of community. Outside the church grounds the flower beds were being prepared for planting on day of adjudication. There was a wide array of colourful planting dotted throughout your village.

### **Nature and Biodiversity in your Locality / An Dúlra agus an Bhithéagsúlacht i do cheantar:**

You are surrounded by a wealth of habitats which have so much potential. The three areas to look at here for the future are; Education, Conservation and Celebration. More information can be found at <http://www.biodiversityireland.ie>

The verges nearest the road are mowed, this contrasts nicely with the wild meadows section set further back from the road. This is providing a home for wildlife. This is a simple yet effective undertaking.

There is an overgrown area between the school and the community centre. This could be used as a designated wildlife area. While the importance of having these areas cannot be overstated, it is nearly as important to have an education element to this. Educating both young and old as to why we need these areas and pointing out the types of flora and fauna that would be expected to be found here is encouraged. As a rural community with farms remember to co-ordinate with any farmers who may be doing environmental work as part of the REPs scheme. We don't have a huge report maybe two or three bullet points would highlight the work done here.

Bird boxes were spotted in the school grounds. Please give details of the results of the swift viewing initiative in conjunction with Birdwatch Ireland.

As the school was open during adjudication we did not view the bug hotel, however this is a great way to get the schoolchildren interested in this area.

### **Sustainability – Doing more with less / Inmharthanacht - Mórán ar an mbeagán:**

It is always great to see concrete results in this section. You mentioned that as part of your involvement in Laois Clean Up at least 30% of litter collected was recycled.

Your brightly coloured wall with the large sign "Recycling Centre" with accompanying pictures makes this area very catching. This area is being utilised as the recycling bins did have items in them. More details of how your residents are encouraged to reduce, reuse and recycle and how effective this is would be helpful. There may be other areas that help save on energy. They can be simple everyday tasks. Does parent's car pool the kids to school? Are lifts provided for people travelling to nearby areas? You might get some handy tips on <http://www.epa.ie/begreen/> and on the Tidy Towns website.

Good luck with your introduction of installing a number of water butts to harvest rainwater. For next year report an approximation of how much this helped (we know an exact figure is not possible) leads to more marks in this category. Planting directly into the ground instead of container planting also leads to a reduction in water resources needed. Consider replacing the container boxes out Village View housing estate with more sustainable planting. The school had a Green flag flying. We would love to know more about what they did to achieve this and this could help you gain extra marks in this category. It doesn't always have to have a member of Tidy Towns involved in a project (in any category) for you to gain extra marks. Maybe a small group of the children from older classes could get involved here as part of your Junior Tidy Town committee?

There were four children's bicycles spotted in the playground. Again if there is an effort to get children to cycle to school be sure to include this in your report.

### **Tidiness and Litter Control / Slachtmhaireacht agus Rialú Bruscair:**

Your regular litter patrols are paying great dividends. Your No Poster policy was adhered to.

We realise that some projects are out of your control in terms of priority but well done in getting your overhead cables put on the agenda for the future.

Dog fouling is a major problem in many towns, villages and cities in Ireland. There wasn't much spotted in your village but your participation in the Green Dog Walkers programme can only improve this.

### **Residential Streets & Housing Areas / Sráideanna Cónaithe & Ceantair Tithíochta:**

The square is enhanced by some lovely housing, including the two opposite the pump.

The housing estate of Village View is very well maintained with a nice green area that includes a seating area. The planter box on the roadside could be replaced by planting directly into the ground.

There was lovely planting on the way into the housing estate Cloghane.

The house beside the recycling centre has an amazing garden of roses which must require a lot of effort. This looks like a real labour of love.

We note from one of your maps that there is a proposal for 50 new houses in the village. This would greatly increase your housing stock.

### **Approach Roads, Streets & Lanes / Bóithre Isteach, Sráideanna & Lánaí:**

The verges were cut back well on all approach roads. The Fáilte sign was in good condition. However the stone "Welcome to Erill" sign was partly blocked at the bottom by the flower container.

We were happy to note that your hedge cutting is only done outside of the nesting times.

The pedestrian crossing just outside the Post office and wide path must encourage walking from the Village View housing estate.

We would certainly support your proposal for a link between the village and the school /community centre area. The road here is narrow and would be difficult and at times potentially dangerous for children to navigate by themselves. This is a shame as it probably means that although the housing estates are within walking distance of the school this will not be effectively utilised.

**Concluding Remarks:**

We applaud you for taking on the challenge of this Competition. We really hope that this will lead to an increase in the benefits you mentioned as a feature of involvement in the competition, including a sense of community spirit to the village and new residents being integrated into the community. We wish you every success in the future